

Message Text

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PAGE 01 TOKYO 10489 01 OF 02 090756Z
ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15

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FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8647

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

USLO PEKING

CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

CONFIDENTIAL SECTION 01 OF 02 TOKYO 10489

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: VN, JA, CH, SREF

SUBJECT: JAPANESE VIEWS ON SRV-PRC RELATIONS

1. SUMMARY: MOFA TAKES VIEW THAT SRV-PRC TENSIONS OVER HANOI TREATMENT OF ETHNIC CHINESE, WHILE SERIOUS IN THEMSELVES, ARE ESSENTIALLY SYMPTOMATIC OF FUNDAMENTAL DISAGREEMENT ON WIDE RANGE OF OTHER ISSUES. JAPANESE ASSUME THAT NEITHER PRC NOR SRV WANTED ETHNIC CHINESE QUESTION TO ESCALATE TO EXTENT IT HAS, BUT THAT BOTH ARE AT LOSS AS TO HOW TO DEFUSE ISSUE. END SUMMARY

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PAGE 02 TOKYO 10489 01 OF 02 090756Z

2. MOFA OFFICIALS DEALING WITH VIETNAM AND CHINA, BELIEVE THAT TREATMENT OF ETHNIC CHINESE IN SRV WAS ESSENTIALLY SECONDARY ISSUE AT OUTSET WITH ATTENTION GIVEN TO IT BY PEKING AND HANOI MORE A REFLECTION OF SERIOUS DIFFERENCES IN VARIETY OF OTHER AREAS, NOTABLY VIETNAM-CAMBODIA CONFLICT AND RELATIONS WITH SOVIET UNION. IN CONTEXT OF THESE TENSIONS, SRV EFFORT TO MOVE MORE RAPIDLY TOWARD ELIMINATION

OF CAPITALISM, FALLING HEAVILY AS IT HAD ON CHINESE BUSINESSMEN, WAS BOUND TO BECOME ESPECIALLY SENSITIVE BILATERAL PROBLEM. OFFICIALS THOUGHT PRC SURELY RECOGNIZED THAT ETHNIC CHINESE, AS VIETNAM'S PREEMINENT CAPITALISTS, WOULD HAVE TO HAVE BEEN AMONG CHIEF TARGETS OF ANY SUCH PROGRAM, AND THEREFORE FELT ALACRITY WITH WHICH PEKING SEIZED UPON ISSUE PROBABLY REFLECTED RESENTMENT OF OVERALL SRV PERFORMANCE MORE THAN SIMPLY TREATMENT OF ITS RESIDENT CHINESE.

3. IN ANY EVENT, WITHIN MOFA CHINA DIVISION, THERE WAS FEELING THAT PRC HAD, SOMEWHAT INEXPLICABLY, OVERREACTION TO SITUATION, WITH NET RESULT BEING UNNECESSARILY HEIGHTENED SRV/PRC TENSION, WHICH WOULD ONLY BENEFIT SOVIETS, AS WELL AS ANXIETY IN OTHER SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS WITH LARGE CHINESE POPULATIONS. (ONE OFFICIAL SPECULATED THAT PEKING'S HANDLING OF PROBLEM REFLECTED INTERNAL POLITICAL DIFFERENCES, AS PERHAPS HAD BEEN FACTOR IN PRC INCURSION INTO SENKAKUS, ANOTHER SITUATION WHICH, HAD IT CONTINUED, WOULD HAVE REDOUNDED TO BENEFIT OF SOVIETS.)

4. SRV RESPONSE TO PRC PROTESTS SEEMED TO MOFA OFFICIALS TO BE FOCUSED CAREFULLY ON OVERSEAS CHINESE QUESTION ITSELF, RATHER THAN OTHER AREAS OF DISAGREEMENT WITH PEKING. THEY THOUGHT SRV SEEMED GENUINELY TO FEEL THAT PEKING HAD MISREPRESENTED HANOI'S CAMPAIGN AS BEING ETHNIC RATHER THAN CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 TOKYO 10489 01 OF 02 090756Z

CLASS-MOTIVATED. JAPANESE EMBASSY IN HANOI REPORTED THAT, INAPPARENT EFFORT TO CORRECT RECORD ON THIS POINT, SRV VICE FOREIGN MINISTER HAD BEGUN CALLING IN AMBASSADORS (INITIALLY OF NON-ALIGNED COUNTRIES) TO EXPLAIN VIETNAM'S SIDE OF STORY.

5. AS FOR MANIFESTATIONS OF SRV POLICY VIS-A-VIS ETHNIC CHINESE, MOFA INFORMATION IS THAT "MOST" CHINESE SHOPS IN CHOLON HAVE BEEN CLOSED, WITH VERY LITTLE ACTIVITY IN ONCE BUSTLING STREETS OF THAT QUARTER. JAPANESE HAD HEARD RUMORS OF SOME SUICIDES AMONG CHINESE POPULATION IN BOTH NORTHERN AND SOUTHERN AREAS OF COUNTRY, BUT KNEW OF NO ANTI-CHINESE VIOLENCE ON PART OF AUTHORITIES OR POPULATION AT LARGE.

6. ACCORDING TO MOFA OFFICIAL WHO ACCOMPANIED RECENT KEIDANREN DELEGATION TO HANOI, SOME OBVIOUSLY CHINESE STORES IN CITY HAD BEEN CLOSED; OTHERS, HOWEVER, WERE OPEN AND SEEMED TO BE DOING NORMAL BUSINESS. OFFICIAL SAW NO EVIDENCE OF ACUTE DISLOCATION OR PANIC AMONG CHINESE POPULATION. NONETHELESS, CHINESE WITH WHOM OFFICIAL TALKED WERE QUITE OPEN IN SAYING THEY INTENDED TO LEAVE VIETNAM

SHORTLY.

7. JAPANESE IN HANOI HAD HEARD THAT PRC AID WAS BEING CUT BY SOME 80 PERCENT, A FIGURE WHICH, ALTHOUGH PLAUSIBLE, WAS BY NO MEANS CONFIRMED. IN ONE OF MORE VISIBLE PRC AID PROJECTS, CONSTRUCTION OF BRIDGE OVER RED RIVER IN HANOI, AT LEAST SOME CHINESE TECHNICIANS HAD BEEN WITHDRAWN.

8. JAPANESE VIEW WAS THAT NEITHER SIDE IN SRV-PRC DISPUTE COULD TAKE PLEASURE OR COMFORT IN WAY SITUATION HAD DEVELOPED, INASMUCH AS IT CONTAINED HAZARDS FOR BOTH PARTIES. VIETNAM FACED INCREASING POSSIBILITY OF ACTIVELY

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PAGE 01 TOKYO 10489 02 OF 02 090800Z
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CONFIDENTIAL SECTION 02 OF 02 TOKYO 10489

HOSTILE GREAT POWER NEIGHBOR; FOR PRC, LIKELY GROWTH OF SOVIET INFLUENCE IN SRV WOULD BE DISCOMFORTING. THUS, WHILE PRC COULD NOT HAVE OVERLOOKED WHAT WAS HAPPENING TO CHINESE IN VIETNAM, ITS RESPONSE AND SRV REACTION HAD CREATED SITUATION NO LONGER ENTIRELY WITHIN EITHER SIDE'S CONTROL. LOGICALLY AT LEAST, QUESTION FOR BOTH WAS TO FIND FACE SAVING WAY TO DE-ESCALATE. MOFA OFFICIALS THOUGHT NEGOTIATIONS TO CALM SITUATION COULD

PROVE VERY DIFFICULT TO INITIATE; IN MEANTIME, THERE WAS
EVER-PRECENT DANGER ONE SIDE OR OTHER WOULD GO TOO FAR.
MANSFIELD

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